

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: US, AS, IN, XF, XO, PFOR, PARM, MARR

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR SHAW'S CALL ON UNDER
SECRETARY SISCO

1. ON MARCH 28, SIR PATRICK SHAW, NEW AUSTRALIAN
AMBASSADOR, PAID COURTESY CALL ON UNDER SECRETARY SISCO.
DURING COURSE OF CONVERSATION, THERE WAS BROAD DISCUSSION
US/AUSTRALIAN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS, INDIAN OCEAN
ISSUES, AND MIDDLE EAST SITUATION. FOLLOWING ARE HIGH-
LIGHTS.

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2. BILATERAL RELATIONS. SHAW STRESSED THAT, DESPITE SOME DIFFICULT MOMENTS IN PAST YEAR, RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN USG AND GOA AT WORKING LEVELS HAVE REMAINED UNCHANGED AND EXCELLENT. HE BRIEFLY OUTLINED CAUSITIVE FACTORS IN LABOR GOVERNMENT POLICY SHIFTS, INCLUDING "NEW NATIONALISM" IN AUSTRALIA, AND FACT LABOR HAD BEEN OUT OF OFFICE FOR 23 YEARS AND WISHED TO ESTABLISH EARLY ACTION RECORD RE ITS DIFFERING ATTITUDES ON MANY ISSUES. HE EMPHASIZED THAT MANY CHANGES DURING PAST YEAR WOULD HAVE ULTIMATELY OCCURRED IN ANY EVENT. ELECTION OF LABOR GOVERNMENT SIMPLY ACCELERATED EXISTING TRENDS. HE ALSO STRESSED GOA FOREIGN POLICY SHIFTS AND "NEW INDEPENDENCE" MADE POSSIBLE BY AND IN LINE WITH US DETENTE INITIATIVES.

3. SHAW DESCRIBED LAST YEAR'S INTEMPERATE GOA MINISTERIAL PUBLIC ATTACKS ON US POLICY AS "PAST HISTORY" WHICH NOT LIKELY AGAIN OCCUR. HE CLAIMED AND (AND GAVE SPECIAL EMPHASIS TO THIS POINT) THAT PM WHITLAM HAD TOLD HIM GOA "NEVER HAD AND NEVER WOULD TAKE ANY ACTION WHICH WOULD INTERFERE WITH CAPACITY OF US TO PERFORM ITS VITAL GLOBAL STRATEGIC ROLE."

4. INDIAN OCEAN. AT SHAW'S REQUEST, SISCO OUTLINED OUR VIEW OF INDIAN OCEAN DEVELOPMENTS AND UNDERScoreD SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER SOVIET PRESENCE, POSSIBILITY OF A FURTHER INCREASE IN SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE WHEN SUEZ CANAL OPENS, AND US VIEW THAT STABILITY REGION AND INTERESTS OF NATIONS IN THAT AREA REQUIRE THAT NO SINGLE GREAT POWER DOMINATE AREA. US DOES NOT SEEK DOMINANCE IN AREA AND DOES NOT WANT ANY OTHER POWER TO GAIN PREDOMINANT POSITION THERE EITHER. DEPLOYMENT US NAVAL UNITS AND PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DIEGO GARCIA SHOULD BE SEEN IN THIS CONTEXT. SHAW GAVE EMPHASIS TO POINT THAT RECENT AUSTRALIAN REQUEST THAT US AND USSR EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES FOR "MUTUAL RESTRAINT" IN INDIAN OCEAN IN NO WAY DIRECTED AT DIEGO GARCIA. GOA "UNDERSTANDS AND ACCEPTS REALITIES OF PRESENT SITUATION AND DIEGO GARCIA REQUIREMENT." IN FACT, SHAW CONFIDED, GOA HOPE IS THAT IN ANY "BALANCED FORCES" IN INDIAN
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OCEAN, US WOULD MAINTAIN MILITARY "EDGE." ALSO, SHAW SAID, GOA IN NO WAY VIEWS THESE DEVELOPMENTS AS AFFECTING US BASES IN AUSTRALIA. GOA INSTEAD IS LOOKING AT PROBLEM FROM "LONG-TERM" POINT OF VIEW, AND NEED TO AVOID MAJOR GREAT POWER CONFRONTATIONS IN AREA WHICH MIGHT ARISE WITH REACTIVE COUNTERACTIONS AND ESCALATING MILITARY PRESENCE. HE ALSO COMMENTED GOA POSITION ON INDIAN OCEAN MUST BE VIEWED IN LIGHT

AUSTRALIA'S CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS WITH ASEAN GOVERNMENTS AND INDIA. MR. SISCO COMMENTED THAT WE HAVE RAISED WITH SOVIETS FROM TIME TO TIME IN PAST POSSIBILITIES FOR LIMITATIONS TALKS IN INDIAN OCEAN AREA, BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS.

5. MIDDLE EAST. IN RESPONSE QUESTION FROM SHAW, MR. SISCO DESCRIBED BRIEFLY MECHANICS OF FORTHCOMING SYRIAN/ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT TALKS AND NOTED THESE WILL BE FAR MORE DIFFICULT THAN EGYPTIAN/ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS BECAUSE THE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS IN QUESTION ARE MORE RESTRICTED AND CLOSE TO POPULATION CENTERS AND BECAUSE BOTH GOVERNMENTS ARE HIGHLY SUSPICIOUS OF ONE ANOTHER AND LESS FLEXIBLE ON ISSUES FACING THEM. NEVERTHELESS, THERE IS REASONABLE HOPE OF SATISFYING OUR IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE OF BRINGING

DISENGAGEMENT TALKS TO "CONCRETE" STAGE. SISCO ALSO POINTED OUT THAT ONLY US ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES AS INTERMEDIARY. NEITHER SOVIETS NOR WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS COULD MEET THAT REQUIREMENT.

6. NW INDIAN OCEAN, ARAB PENINSULA, PERSIAN GULF, SOUTH ASIA. IN BROAD DISCUSSION GEOPOLITICS THIS AREA, MR. SISCO EMPHASIZED AGAIN US OBJECTIVE IS TO ASSURE THAT NO SINGLE POWER ACHIEVES DOMINATION IN AREA. BOTH AGREED THIS IS A STRATEGICALLY CRITICAL AREA WITH IMPLICATIONS BEYOND ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT. SISCO COMMENTED OUR POLICY PEGGED ON IRANIAN/SAUDI ARABIAN COOPERATION IN PARTICULAR, AND REGIONAL COOPERATION IN GENERAL. HE ADDED IRANIANS ARE EAGER TO COOPERATE WITH SAUDIS, WHILE LATTER, ALTHOUGH MOVING EXTREMELY CAUTIOUSLY, ARE GOING IN RIGHT DIRECTION.

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7. AT CONCLUSION CONVERSATION, SHAW COMMENTED GOA HAD BEEN EXTREMELY IMPRESSED WITH US "STAYING POWER" DURING MIDDLE EAST CRISIS AND OIL EMBARGO, INCLUDING IN PARTICULAR US ABILITY TO WEATHER ECONOMIC STRAINS OF EMBARGO, AND TO BRING TO BEAR "RIGHT MEASURE OF MILITARY STRENGTH AT RIGHT TIME." KISSINGER

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